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RURAL DISTRICT OF ROMNEY MARSH, KENT




ANNUAL REPORTS OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR 1957



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ROMNEY MARSH RURAL DISTRICT, KENT

Annual Reports of the Medical Officer of Health and  
Public Health Inspector for the Year 1957.

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Mr. Chairman and Councillors,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1957.

Population

The Registrar General's estimate of the mid-year Home Population was 4,540, which was an increase of 30, over that of 1956.

Live Births and Birth Rate

The total number of live-births was 70 (37 male, 33 female) which was a decrease of 10 from that of 1956, and the crude birth rate was accordingly 15.42; adjusted by the Registrar General's Comparability Factor, which is computed from a Standardised population & provides comparison with other Districts, the rate becomes 17.73; this compares well with that of 16.1 for England and Wales.

The high post-war birth rates have gradually declined to an equilibrium around 16.

Stillbirths and Rate

There were no stillbirths and this nil rate compares very favourably with that of 22.4 for England and Wales. In general terms, this is an index of adequate ante-natal and obstetric care by Practitioners and Midwives.

Infant Deaths and Mortality Rate

No infant deaths were registered, which is also very satisfactory to record; the rate for England and Wales was 22.4.

At the beginning of this Century in 1901, there were 138 deaths for every 1,000 live births throughout the Country, in contrast to the comparatively low modern rates, which provide an insight into the progress which modern medical science has achieved.

Complementary to the services of Practitioners and Consultants and Midwives, the Child Welfare Centres have made a valuable contribution to this achievement in the prevention of ill-health and the creation of positive health.

Maternal Deaths and Mortality Rate

There were no maternal deaths which is also very gratifying to record.

Also at the beginning of this Century, there were 5 maternal deaths for every 1,000 total (live and still) births throughout the Country compared with a rate of under one today, which represents approximately 500 maternal deaths annually.

The principal cause of these deaths, according to a report by the Central Health Services Council, is Toxaemia of Pregnancy and it is stated that many of these could be avoided by more thorough ante-natal and obstetric care; early diagnosis and treatment are essential safe-guards.

Total Deaths and Rate

The total number of deaths from all causes was 57 (31 male, 26 female), and the crude death rate was accordingly 12.57; when adjusted by the Registrar General's Comparability Factor which is computed from a standardised population and allows comparison of the rate with other Districts



it becomes 11.5. That for England and Wales was also 11.5.

The principal cause of deaths was Heart and Circulatory Disease and Vascular lesions of the nervous system. The majority of these were amongst the aged.

Disease of the coronary artery of the heart is, however, an exception as it takes its toll of middle-aged persons. There were 12 deaths from this cause and the ages at death were: 47, 55, 65, 67, 70 years and upwards. It is thought that continuous mental and physical stress and excessive smoking are important contributory factors.

Cancer, as expected, caused the second largest number of deaths, in all eight. Most of these were amongst the aged, amongst whom procrastination in seeking medical advice is a common factor, associated with the insidious nature of the disease. It is unequivocal, however, that many younger lives could be saved or prolonged if diagnosis were established early; treatment by modern methods is highly successful if the disease has not become too far advanced.

There were no deaths from Cancer of the Lung. National statistics have brought into relief the increasing mortality from this disease within the last twenty-five years, and atmospheric pollution and excessive smoking are thought to be important contributory factors or primary causes. If any inference can be made from the fact that there were no deaths from this cause during the year in this District with a population of 4,540, it should be that freedom from atmospheric pollution is a more important factor than the inhalation of tobacco smoke. It is highly probable, however, that both factors, acting together, re-inforce each other as contributory causes.

The other causes of death were miscellaneous and there was no unusual influence.

#### Infectious Disease

There was no death from Infectious Disease, which is in remarkable contrast to the relatively high mortality as recently as twenty-five years ago. For example, immunisation against Diphtheria has been proved to be a great success in the field of prevention, and there are firm grounds for optimism that vaccination against Poliomyelitis and Whooping Cough, as for Smallpox, will be equally successful. The introduction of the Sulphonamides in 1936 and later of penicillin and other Antibiotics have placed specific weapons in the hands of the profession for treatment. All the more serious infectious diseases can now be successfully prevented or treated, with perhaps the exception of winter epidemics of Influenza; it is probable, however, that a vaccine combining the various strains of virus will be produced for future use, similar to the vaccine that was produced for Asian Influenza, which was used only on a limited scale to protect priority personnel in the Health Services.

#### Asian Influenza

There was a wide-spread epidemic of the so-called Asian Flu. The virus originated in China and Japan and quickly became world-wide in distribution. It reached this Country early in the Autumn, which is an unusual season for an out break of Influenza.

The virus was identified locally by the Public Health Laboratory Service from throat swabs and blood agglutination tests as Asian A/England/527/57.

The illness, if uncomplicated, was not serious. The main site of infection was the upper respiratory tract, and acute tracheitis accompanied by a severe unproductive cough was common. The illness usually began with a high temperature which gradually declined to normal about the fifth day. The period of incapacity was on an average from seven to fourteen days.

In a minority, the lungs were invaded by secondary bacteria causing pneumonia; of these the Staphylococcus Aureus was the most virulent, and several fulminating deaths occurred in other Districts from this complication.

As the disease was not notifiable the actual number of cases was not known. No second wave of infection eventualised later in the winter as elsewhere, although a few sporadic cases occurred.



### Poliomyelitis

Two cases of the paralytic type were notified in children aged 10 and 12 years. There was no direct relationship between these, as is usual, but the virus was wide-spread in the various Districts at that time.

Vaccination has been proceeding as quickly as supplies of British, Canadian and American vaccines have become available for children in the age group between six months and fifteen years and also of expectant mothers.

There is already good reason to hope that it will effectively prevent the onset of the disease.

### Whooping Cough

There was a small outbreak of this disease, 49 cases having been notified. Although the symptoms are very distressing, the disease is not commonly serious unless broncho-pneumonia supervenes or partial collapse of the lungs and asphyxiation which may occur in infants due to obstruction of the bronchi by excessive secretion of mucus or catarrh. Infants should be shielded from infection, if possible, for this reason.

However, it is hoped that the modern vaccines which are now available at the Child Welfare Centres and also through the family Practitioner, will effectively protect those inoculated.

### Measles

A small outbreak of Measles also occurred. It is fortunate that ordinarily this is not a serious disease, as it spreads through classrooms very rapidly. In less than one per cent of cases, as with Whooping Cough, broncho-pneumonia, caused by secondary invading bacteria superimposes itself upon the infection and may progress to an advanced stage in twenty-four hours and is especially dangerous in infants.

Treatment by antibiotics is, however, rarely unsuccessful if it is applied reasonably early.

### Scarlet Fever

Three sporadic cases of this disease were notified. The illness, in its present phase is comparatively mild, in contrast to its severity in the last Century and early part of this Century; most cases are treated at home, and complications such as Acute Nephritis and Endocarditis are rarely met with to-day; its present most common complication is Otitis Media.

Specific measures of prevention and specific treatment by Sulphonamides or Antibiotics can be applied successfully to this disease.

### Erysipelas

One case of this disease was notified. This was formerly a very serious disease before the introduction of the Sulphonamides and antibiotics provided specific means of treatment and today deaths are very rare.

### Tuberculosis

Only one new case of respiratory disease was notified.

No new case of non-respiratory or bovine disease was notified, which in general terms is an index of the safety of the milk and meat supplies.

Also there were no deaths, which is a reflection of the effectiveness of modern treatment, which has achieved remarkable progress within recent years, after Centuries of ignorance, suffering and seemingly hopeless struggle. There are now no waiting beds for Sanatoria and after discharge, many patients have treatment continued at home.

The Mass Radiography Service is also of great value in detecting early or unsuspected cases who would sooner or later have become open sources of infection to others.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your interest and assistance in the work of the Department and also the staff for their efficient co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. MARSHALL. M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

STATISTICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT

FOR 1957

Area:- 31,031 acres

Registrar-General's Estimate of:-

The Resident Population	...	...	...	4,540
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Number of Inhabited Houses According to  
the Rate Books

...	...	...	1,855
-----	-----	-----	-------

Rateable Value:-

...	...	...	£56,483
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Sum Represented by a Penny Rate;-

...	...	...	£227
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Social Conditions

Romney Marsh Rural District is essentially agricultural in character and interests, but, as part of the boundary is formed by the sea with wide expanses of sand, there is considerable catering for the large numbers of holiday-makers and weekend trippers who are attracted to the district, and associated there are large holiday-camps and licensed caravan sites. There is negligible unemployment and social conditions are generally satisfactory.



EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS

		<u>Total</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>		<u>Romney Marsh Rural Dist.</u>	<u>England and Wales</u>
1.	Live Births	70	37	33	Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population	15.42 (Adjusted Rate 17.73)	16.1
	(a) Legitimate	66	34	32			
	(b) Illegitimate	4	3	1			
2.	Stillbirths	-	-	-	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births	-	22.4
	(a) Legitimate	-	-	-			
	(b) Illegitimate	-	-	-			
3.	Deaths	57	31	26	Death rate per 1,000 resident population	12.57 (Adjusted Rate 11.5)	11.5
4.	Deaths from Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion.	-	-	-	Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births.	-	Not available
5.	Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age.	-	-	-			
	(a) Legitimate	-	-	-			
	(b) Illegitimate	-	-	-			
	Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births					-	23.0
	Rate re legitimate infants					-	
	Rate re illegitimate infants					-	
6.	Deaths from Cancer (all ages)					8	
	Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)					-	
	Deaths from Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea					1	
	Deaths from Measles					-	

The following cases of Infectious Diseases were notified during the year.

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	3
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	49
Acute Primary or Influenzal Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	16
Measles	...	...	...	...	...	47
Acute Poliomyelitis (Paralytic)	...	...	...	...	...	2
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	1



CAUSES OF DEATH IN ROMNEY MARSH RURAL DISTRICT

DURING, 1957

ALL CAUSES					Males	Females
					31	26
1.	Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	...	-	-
2.	Tuberculosis, other	...	...	...	-	-
3.	Syphilitic disease	...	...	...	-	-
4.	Diphtheria	...	...	...	-	-
5.	Whooping Cough	...	...	...	-	-
6.	Meningococcal infections	...	...	...	-	-
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	-	-
8.	Measles	...	...	...	-	-
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases	...	...	...	-	-
10.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	...	...	...	-	1
11.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	...	...	...	-	-
12.	Malignant neoplasm, breast	...	...	...	-	1
13.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	...	...	...	-	-
14.	Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	...	...	...	4	2
15.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	...	...	...	-	1
16.	Diabetes	...	...	...	1	1
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	...	...	...	2	3
18.	Coronary disease, angina	...	...	...	9	3
19.	Hypertension with heart disease	...	...	...	1	-
20.	Other heart disease	...	...	...	4	3
21.	Other circulatory disease	...	...	...	2	1
22.	Influenza	...	...	...	-	1
23.	Pneumonia	...	...	...	-	-
24.	Bronchitis	...	...	...	1	2
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system	...	...	...	-	-
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	...	2	-
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	...	...	...	-	1
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis	...	...	...	-	-
29.	Hyperplasia of prostate	...	...	...	1	-
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	...	...	...	-	-
31.	Congenital malformations	...	...	...	-	-
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	...	...	...	1	4
33.	Motor vehicle accidents	...	...	...	1	-
34.	All other accidents	...	...	...	2	2
35.	Suicide	...	...	...	-	-
36.	Homicide and operations of war	...	...	...	-	-

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA AND  
VACCINATION AGAINST SMALLPOX, 1957

The following is a return of (A) the number of children who were immunised against Diphtheria and (B) the number of persons who were vaccinated against Smallpox, during the year ended 31st December, 1957.

(A) DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

<u>Year of Birth</u>	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957		Total
Primary Inoculations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	5	36	10		56
Re-inforcing Inoculations	-	-	-	6	20	13	8	2	11	28	4	-	-	-	-		92

(B) VACCINATION

Primary Vaccination	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	16	17	Before 1943	38
Re-Vaccination	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	5

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA, 1957

The following is a return of the number of children under the age of 15 years on 31st December, 1957, who had completed a course of immunisation at any time before that date (i.e., at any time since 1st January, 1943).

<u>Year of Birth</u>	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	Total
Last complete course of injections (whether primary or booster) 1953 - 1957	10	17	8	20	43	70	70	64	58	63	57	36	48	47	10	621
1952 or earlier	39	27	35	53	24	2	22	32	13	2	-	-	-	-	-	249

POLIOMYELITIS VACCINATION, 1957

The following table gives the numbers of children who received a course of two injections against poliomyelitis during the year ended 31st December, 1957.

<u>Born</u>	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	Total
	8	7	14	10	3	2	5	2	1	1	1	51



TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Mortality, 1957

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths				Total Cases on Register			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	10	3	2
1 ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
5 ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
15 ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
25 ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
35 ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
45 ...	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
55 ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
65 and upwards	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				

1 8 1

There were no deaths from tuberculosis of patients who had not been notified as suffering from that disease.

# REPORT OF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR AND SURVEYOR

## Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

### 1. Water Supply

The district is supplied by the Folkestone and District Water Company and by the Mid-Kent Water Company. No extensions to main were carried out during the year, now approximately 96% of the houses in the area have a piped water supply.

Three samples of water were obtained and these were satisfactory.

### 2. Drainage, Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government held an informal inquiry to bring up to date the evidence previously submitted as regards the proposed sewerage scheme for Dymchurch and St. Mary's Bay. The results of this inquiry are not yet available, but the necessity for the scheme cannot be over emphasised. A series of sea water samples (40) were taken during the summer and only one of these was found to be free from Faecal Coli with counts of up to 180,000 plus per 100 ml. for the others. On one occasion Salmonella Thompson was isolated, and it has been decided to continue these tests for a long period, at fixed intervals during 1958. Without this future sampling, evidence, together with visual evidence readily available clearly show that the existing sewage disposal scheme (direct discharge across the sands at low tide) is prejudicial to health and could be a source of mass infection of vast numbers of people.

### 3. Cesspool Emptying

During the year, 1242 cesspools were emptied, comprising 2170 vehicle loads. Two free emptyings are given in each half year, thereafter a charge is made of £1 per emptying, except for the trade premises which are charged at £1 per load with no free emptyings.

### 4. Public Cleansing

Equipment - One Dennis 12 yd. Barrier loader. Staff - 1 driver/loader, 1 loader. This vehicle purchased late in 1956 is giving excellent service with considerably greater efficiency than the old side loader. During the summer months this vehicle is working up to 12 hours a day and if the amount of refuse continues to expand, it will be necessary to employ additional labour.

A weekly collection is made throughout the coastal belt and fortnightly through the remainder of the district. Trade refuse is collected at the rate of 6d. per bin from various trade premises.

### 5. Housing

Number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under the Public Health and Housing Acts	...	...	...	57
Number of houses found to be in any respects unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	25
Number of houses inspected and found to be unfit and repairable at a reasonable expense	...	...	...	18
Number of houses in which defects were remedied by informal action	...	...	...	14
Number of houses in which defects were remedied by statutory action	...	...	...	4
Demolition orders made	...	...	...	Nil



Houses closed in pursuance of an undertaking given  
under Section 110 of the Housing Act, 1936 ... Nil

Number of dwelling houses reconditioned and undertakings  
cancelled ... Nil

Number of houses closed by unofficial action pending  
re-conditioning ... 5

6. Improvement Grants and Conversions;

Improvement grants were made in respect of 12 houses the total cost of  
improvements being £6355. 16. 2. In nearly every case this entailed the  
complete reconditioning of the houses and included provision of bathrooms,  
hot water supply, new floors, drainage systems and works to prevent rising  
dampness.

7. Sanitary Inspection of the Area

During the year the following inspections and visits were made:-

	<u>No. of visits</u>
Complaints general	13
Complaints housing	12
Houses inspected	57
Concerning improvement grants	90
Nuisances found (18 premises)	68
Nuisances abated (14 premises)	38
Infectious diseases investigated	5
Premises disinfected	3
Re-visits	159
Caravan sites and holiday camps	39
Caravans	21
Premises disinfested (verminous)	5
Visits, re-rodent control	21
Cesspool emptying	49
Refuse collection	72
Bakehouses	12
Slaughterhouses (meat inspection)	88
Slaughterhouses (premises)	4
Cafe kitchens	44
Food premises (Food & Drugs Act)	72
Stalls (Food & Drugs Act)	16
Shops (Shops Act)	58
Ice Cream (premises)	9
Licenced premises	8
Dairies	3
Milk distributors	18
Water supply	11
Factories	26
Sewers and sewage disposal plant	118
Housing (application for re-housing)	29
Unfit food	3
Petroleum regulations	12
Building inspections (Byelaws)	207
Town and Country Planning Acts	101
Council houses (under construction)	15
Council houses (repairs)	251
Car parks (visits and inspections)	175
Public conveniences	185
Miscellaneous and re-visits	178

Food and Drugs Act, 1955  
List of premises inspected

	<u>No. of visit</u>
Shops (various)	58
Cafes	44
Public Houses (mostly selling food)	21
Hotels and Holiday Camps	5
Slaughterhouses	1
Stalls	15

Food premises registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955.

Ice Cream	22
Sausage manufacturers	6

There are no manufacturers of ice cream in the district.

Food Hygiene Regulations 1955/56:

All food premises affected by these regulations have been inspected and the majority were found to be up to necessary standard. Works of improvement have been carried out to premises as follows:-

Hot water supply	9
Wash hand basin with H. & C. water	11
Sink	11
Ventilation	1
New conveniences (public house)	2
Floor	1
Premises cleaned	1

Educational Activity:

No organised education of food handlers has been carried out.

Condemned food:

Disposed of by the Council to refuse tips. Total amounts disposed of (all voluntary surrender). 57lb. 9 czs.

Ice Cream (Heat Treatment) Regulations 1947-52

Three samples were obtained and all were satisfactory. All ice cream sold in the district is made by large scale manufacturers, none of whom have premises in the district. Samples are taken only when it appears that there may have been a breakdown of refrigerators etc., of where contamination is suspected.

Milk supply:

Only pasteurised and tuberculin tested milk is sold in the district.

Petroleum Installations:

One new installation was inspected and tested.

Rodent Control:

There is one part time rodent operator. Total number of visits made ... .. 695

Meat Inspection:

One hundred per cent meat inspection maintained at one small slaughterhouse. Please see table.

Factories: Please see table.



CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

	Cattle Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	40	-	3	73	205
Number inspected	40	-	3	73	205
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	1	1
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	9	-	-	-	3
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	-	-	-	2%
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	1	-	-	-	9
Percentage of the number of inspected affected with tuberculosis	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	-	-	-	4 $\frac{10}{2}$ %

Cistercercus Bovis. No evidence of infection found.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937 and 1948

Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health

Premises (1)	Number on reg- ister (2)	Inspec- tions (3)	Number of Written Notices (4)	Occupiers Prosecuted (5)
1. Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by local authorities	-	-	-	-
2. Factories not included in 1 in which section 7 is enforced by the local authority	10	14	-	-
3. Other premises in which section 7 is enforced by the local authority (excluding out workers' premises)	4	4	-	-
Totals	14	18	-	-

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found		Referred:		Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	1	1	-	-	-
Overcrowding (S.2)	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	1	-	-	-	-
Sanitary conveniences (S.7)	-	-	-	-	-
(a) Insufficient	-	-	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	-	-	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2	1	-	-	-